

VZCZCXRO1228

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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9175

INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNCAN/ALL CANADIAN POSTS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY PRIORITY

RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 1417

RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 0267

C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 000167

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [EAID](#) [ZI](#) [CA](#)

SUBJECT: CANADA UPHOLDS NEED FOR TOUGH ZIMBABWE BENCHMARKS

REF: A. STATE 18601

[1](#)B. 08 OTTAWA 1424

[1](#)C. OTTAWA 134

Classified By: PolMinCouns Scott Bellard, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Ahead of the March 20 informal meeting in Washington of like-minded countries on Zimbabwe, Canada believes the previously agreed benchmarks on political reconciliation and reform remain valid. Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) Director for Eastern and Southern Africa Lisa Stadelbauer told poloff on March 3 that Canada's broad message in Washington will be that like-minded countries should remain firm in telling Zimbabwe that it must make further "demonstrable" progress towards those milestones before the international community re-engages. She said that Canada remains "optimistic" that the new government in Harare will eventually meet the benchmarks, but is also "troubled" by the lack of progress on "low cost" issues, including loosening of media restrictions and the release of political prisoners.

[1](#)2. (C) Stadelbauer noted that she had recently returned from "good, productive" talks in London with British counterparts, and that Canada and the UK were in sync on the need for real progress on benchmarks. She added that the food security situation had grown even more precarious since the Ottawa meeting (ref b), according to Canada's head of mission in Zimbabwe.

[1](#)3. (C) DFAIT Eastern and Southern Africa Deputy Director Jeff Senior separately confirmed to poloff on March 5 that Canada has a "high degree of interest" in the meeting in Washington.

It plans to send DFAIT's Director General (Assistant Secretary equivalent) for Africa, as well as the Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) Africa Director General. He noted that Canada's head of mission will be flying in from Harare for the meeting as well. Senior expressed a hope to see the meeting agenda as soon as possible in order to enable DFAIT to coordinate on a "whole of government" basis to prepare Canada's interventions. Senior and Stadelbauer both expressed a keen interest in knowing who will lead the meeting from the U.S. side.

[1](#)4. (C) Senior also lamented that CIDA showed no flexibility on further Canadian aid to Zimbabwe, absent complete compliance with the benchmarks. Senior said that DFAIT had urged CIDA -- unsuccessfully -- to show a greater willingness to "meet Tsvangirai half way" and to "offer carrots to reformers" within the government. He predicted that Canada would be unlikely to respond positively to any new or potential aid requests. (Note: Zimbabwe is not on Canada's latest list -- ref c -- of priority assistance targets, now down to 20 globally. End note)

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